



Services in the Meeting House

Our theme for January is **Grace**.

Sunday, January 6 **Taking Risks: The Sage of Sophia**

10:30 am

Rev. Dr. Robert R.N. Ross

This service will be about the contact we make with other human beings – as individuals – and how the entire world may depend on what we do.

The Rev. Dr. Robert R.N. Ross, a Unitarian Universalist minister, has recently been a professor at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, teaching courses in Philosophy and the Study of Religion. Dr. Ross was a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University, a philosophy professor at Skidmore College, a Consulting Engineer at Digital Equipment Corporation, and Senior Consultant at the National Academy of Public Administration in Washington, DC. His most recent book, Walking to New Orleans: Ethics and the Concept of Participatory Design in Post-Disaster Reconstruction, was published in 2008. Rob is an active surfer, kayaker, and leads the Cajun-Zydeco band les cigognes.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, January 13 **Blessing of the Animals – A Multigenerational Service**

10:30 am

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Cathy Seggel, DRE

It's time for our annual, multigenerational worship service where we honor and share the animals who share our homes, lives, and families. All pets are welcome! Last year, we had cats and dogs, fish and lizards, even a chicken! So come one, come all – just please make sure your pets are appropriately leashed, crated, or otherwise contained. If you can't bring your pet, virtual pets (stuffed animals, photos, etc.) are also welcome as proxies. If you lost your pet in the past year, feel free to bring a framed photo that we can stand on the pulpit table during the service, to honor those loved and lost. And last, invite your friends and neighbors to bring their pets for a blessing, too! All are welcome for this morning of music and readings, consecration and celebration.

Childcare open for infants to three-year-olds in the Parish House, second floor

Community Collection for the Providence Village

Sunday, January 20 **Kingdom Come:**

The Theology and Prayer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

10:30 am

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

Our service this morning will explore the religious understandings and expressions that shaped and held Dr. King's ministry and vision. We'll look at how he used prayer, thought, and sometimes shocking honesty to meet the challenges of his day. And we'll consider what we can learn now, as inheritors of his time, his ministry, and his dream.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, January 27 **Filling the Void**

10:30 am

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

"No one can convince me we aren't gluttons for our doom" goes the line from the great Indigo Girls song "Prince of Darkness." This morning we'll look at what that can really mean, as we explore the seduction and shame associated with addictive behaviors. Focusing in particular on eating disorders, we'll look at what in our society and ourselves sends some of us, especially young women, down these paths. We'll look also at what answers and healing are available to help us contend with these challenges, including answers and healing available to us when we look to our faith, our religious community, our teachings, and our lived experience.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

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Lately . . .

As I write this, I'm all about Christmas, which is less than a week away. But soon enough, January will be upon us, and there's a lot to look forward to then, too. We'll have that post-holiday time to relax a bit, take time to catch up with our lives, start to live into our new year resolutions – or not.

Our monthly theme, which will inflect all our worship in January, will be Grace, an idea and experience I always look forward to exploring. And there are some exciting developments at church, including the start of our new Ministerial Intern for Pastoral Care, Kevin Carson, who will be with us from January to June of 2019.

Kevin is a past member and lay leader at First Unitarian, who has taken recent years to prepare for a career in UU ministry. Ready to find his own church next fall, he'll be spending the second part of this church year with us, working 20 hours a week, offering pastoral care and helping us to relaunch a lay ministry program, and coordinating our parish care program that supports members and friends in need of (usually short-term) help with rides, food, and so forth, especially after an illness or injury. Because this is in fulfillment of a pastoral care requirement for ministry training, we're benefiting from Kevin's time free of charge. It's a great opportunity for us to get some much-needed assistance, while offering a necessary experience to someone who has a lot to offer Unitarian Universalist ministry. Please welcome Kevin when you see him, and feel very free to be in touch with him for pastoral support. Kevin's schedule, office hours, and more information will be available when he starts in January.

In the meantime, it's getting pretty cold out. I know we all want to bundle up and stay warm, and I hope we can all be cozy this holiday, and do what we can to help others stay warm and safe, too. But in the midst of the rush, the holiday pace, the cold that makes us hunch our shoulders and turn our backs to the wind, let's also find time to look up at the winter night sky – so dark as it is, the stars so brilliant as they are in the cold, crisp air. Let's take time to look at the dark lace of tree branches against a daytime sky, at the birds who stay among us in winter, bright blue or red, all the brighter against the withdrawn world they enliven with their darting, lovely forms. Remember to look up close at snowflakes when they fall and see their crystalline intricacy. Listen to the geese on the wing as they call to each other on their long journey. Life is different in winter, but not gone, and the beauty of nature is also different, but not gone, present in all these visions, and of course in fresh-fallen snow and icy lakes. Make sure you let the beauty in – all of it is precious, and there for us, when we look.

See you in church,



Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
min@firstunitarianprov.org

Liz's work days are Sunday through Thursday. She is available for appointments Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (Sunday is, well . . . Sunday, and Thursday is writing/study day). The best way to catch up with her is to make an appointment, even if it is simply a specific time to connect by phone. Contact Administrator Nancy Forsstrom (401.421.7970 or admin@firstunitarianprov.org) and she will find you a time in Liz's schedule.

Looking Ahead to Summer 2019

Our worship services from mid-June through Labor Day are planned and hosted by the Worship Committee and other members of the extended Worship Team. These services are led by members and friends of the congregation and occasional guest speakers. They provide a unique opportunity for us to learn more about the spiritual insights, passions, and life-changing events that are important to the people who share this religious community.

The Worship Team is asking the congregation to offer suggestions for possible speakers, including yourself, interested in sharing an aspect of their spiritual path.

Please offer your ideas to the Worship chair, Neil Bartholomew (ngbart@gmail.com), or to any of our other Worship Associates: Suzanne Alden, Michael Currier, Elissa Emerson, Betty Finn, Susan Fisher, Greg Kniseley, Kelley Smith, Pam Steager, Roxanne Stern, or Peter Van Erp.

Did You Know . . . Our Sunday Services Are Online?

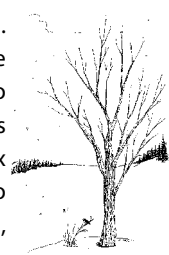
Our Sunday services are now live-streamed on Facebook. If you can't come to church on a Sunday, join us on your smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop. Go to First Unitarian Church of Providence on Facebook and tune in at 10:30am on Sundays.

Later in the week, both the text and audio of Sunday sermons are posted on our church website (firstunitarianprov.org). Go to Worship, scroll down to Past Services, and click on the sermon you would like to hear or read.

– The Communications Team

Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the staff decides if church will be canceled. If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, church will be canceled. A cancellation decision will be made by 7:00a and conveyed to these media outlets: TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI PBS; and radio stations 630WPRO, 920WHJJ, 1180 CCNX News Radio, WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM, 95.5 WBRU.



If church is open during a storm, no one should make heroic efforts to get to church. Use your best judgment about whether it is safe to drive or walk.



Spiritual Pathways

If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito. – The Dalai Lama

This month, I'm sharing one of the messages that I delivered in young people's chapel. It seems relevant to the way I would like to greet 2019.

"There is a New Year's tradition to make resolutions. Resolutions are promises you make to yourself about who you want to be. As Unitarian Universalists we believe each person is important and that we should all work for a peaceful, fair, and free world. Resolutions are one way to remind us to believe in ourselves and let our inner light shine. Did you know that you have the power to shape the future? The choices and changes you make help create the future.

"We all have the power to act as prophets and change the future. If you could promote just one change in the world at this time, what would it be? What issue is important to you? Do you think other people also think it's important? [Our young people shared amazing responses...]

"Rev. Rebecca Parker wrote, "It is better to see [the prophet] as the crest of a wave, the sparkling foam breaking brightly from the force of a whole ocean moving and swelling up from underneath."

"So, we are all part of creating and keeping a fair and free world. I like the expression "Everyday Acts and Ordinary Rebellions." It reminds me that each day, every minute, we are making choices about how to act and what to pay attention to. Some examples of everyday acts and ordinary rebellions are:

- Being kind to someone you have usually ignored;
- Standing up for someone being made fun of;
- Sharing your idea or experience even though you are afraid;
- Speaking up when your idea or opinion is different from most;
- Refusing to go along with your friends when they are doing something hurtful or unkind or wrong.

"We can help each other with this. We are stronger and smarter together. When we work together we can feel connection, have, and make progress. We can remind ourselves of what needs to be done and thank each other for what we have already accomplished. In fact, one of the reasons that people come to Unitarian Universalist congregations, like this one, is that we believe we can and should move together and help each other as we experience all kinds of feelings, both happy and sad. We learn and grow throughout our lives.

"When we share our stories here, we build community, knowing that our church is a place where people want to celebrate our joys with us, support us through our struggles, and take interest in our hopes and dreams. To really know us.

"As you leave chapel today, you may drop a bead into our bowl as you think about a hopeful change you will keep in your heart and help to make happen in 2019."

Take good care ...

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
401.421.7970
dre@firstunitarianprov.org

Is It Your Turn to Participate in the Wholly Family Service?

Sunday, February 10

This multigenerational service has become an annual tradition, a way to share diverse family stories, connecting us as a community. We are looking for families interested in participating in our Wholly Family Service on Sunday, February 10 – singles, couples, step, adopted, multicultural, GBLTQ – all kinds of families, with or without pets, are encouraged to participate.

Interested families can contact Cathy Seggel (401 421-7970 or dre@firstunitarianprov.org).

Youth Group Offers "TechConnect"

Sunday, January 27, 11:45a to 1:00p

On January 27, the Senior High Youth Group will be hosting what we're calling a TechConnect. Anyone of any age can come and receive assistance with your cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc. We will be offering basic services for those who are technologically challenged, so if you're looking for someone to teach you Photoshop, please look somewhere else.

This event will be held during Coffee Hour on January 27. Anyone who wants help should sign up with Cathy Seggel (dre@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970). The first to sign up will surely be served. If this event is successful, we plan to repeat it in the spring.

In exchange for our help, we would love for those assisted to bring us some baked goods.

IMPORTANT: Be sure to bring any passwords you will need in order for us to better help you.

We hope to see you there!

– Youth Group Techies

Our Annual TACO FIESTA!

Saturday, January 26, 6:00–8:00p

What's better than tacos with teens? Your hosts, the First Unitarian Coming of Age class, their families and mentors, invite you to be with them for "A First Unitarian Fiesta," featuring a fun evening with delicious tacos, fabulous pastries, and a variety show.

Chase the winter chill away, relax and mingle as awesome eighth-graders and their families serve you. We'll also have raffle tickets for a chance to win a variety of specialty items. Raffle donations are welcome! To donate an item, email Kevin Porter (Kporter651@gmail.com).



This event helps support the Coming of Age trip to Boston UUA headquarters in the spring. Tickets are available during Coffee Hour. Single tickets: \$8; family tickets (four+): \$25

Annual Gift Card Drive

The Senior High Youth Group is partnering with Dorcas International Institute for our annual gift-card drive. Dorcas "provide(s) programs and services for immigrants, refugees, and those who need it most in the community," as stated on their website diiri.org. Most appreciated are gift cards such as Walmart, Target, Price Right, and Visa – stores that are fairly inexpensive and accessible by bus. You can give gift cards directly to one of the Senior High Youth or Cathy Seggel in her church office. And thank you so much!



Sight Lines

Happy New Year, Everyone!

Do you make New Year's resolutions? I don't really. But what I often do is to reflect on one or two things I want to do differently. I guess that's a resolution... This year, I hope to adjust my reaction to the frequency of changes that I expect will occur during the year.

Now, I'm open to change, and I sometimes seek it out. But the older I get, the more comfortable I have become with the way things are, even when change could yield new opportunities or enrich my life in new and different ways. Change is scary. It is uncomfortable. It is risky. Sometimes the pace of change is too fast or too many things are changing at once. It could feel overwhelming or it may not turn out the way I envisioned. So, this year I plan to get out of my head and leverage my coach and mentor more to gain different perspectives on the transformations that will occur.

Individuals aren't the only ones that experience change. Organizations, like our church, do as well. We have a new minister. We have a new church administrator. We are attracting new and different people to our church – by the way, membership has recently topped the 500 threshold, putting us in the category of a "large" church – and this may trigger other changes. None of our changes will be easy. They will require us to be open and patient. But change will be necessary if we are to achieve our strategic goals.

As we transform, I believe we will need to talk to each other more in order to hear, understand, and appreciate each other's perspectives. I would like the folks who like announcements during worship services to hear the perspectives of those who do not; those who think we should sell the church building and those who think we should keep it; those who want children during worship services and those who do not; those who think we are doing the right amount of social justice, or think we should be doing much more, and those who think we are doing too much. These are a few examples of our polarizing topics.

I plan to work with the UUA and District leaders to introduce the concept of "polarity mapping." It is a tool for viewing solutions to problems and disagreements in a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" way.

And now for a few updates.

- The parking lot is almost complete. The final paving will take place in the spring. We continue to make progress on our parking lot lighting project.
- We got a lot of positive feedback about hosting the Providence Athenaeum's program in December and we plan to do something similar with the Epic Theatre in the spring.
- We were unable to complete work on the Atrium glass wall this fall. That work will be completed in the spring.
- Later this month, there will be a Communications Summit to review the what, how, and why we communicate to you.

Happy 2019! It will be a busy year for the church and the start of some new journeys.



John Simmonds
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

"Hello my name is" Name Tags – Say Hello

Imagine coming into a large vibrant community as a new person – you have so many new faces and names to learn. Wearing your name tag is a thoughtful way to help everyone, from newcomers to long-timers, find their way into our community. It helps all of us learn each other's names and reminds us of names we just can't quite remember. It signals that we are welcoming and ready for conversation. If you need a new name tag, you can request one on the sign-up sheet (on the clip board) on the Welcome Table in the Parish House hallway. Thank you for wearing your name tag – and say Hello to someone who is new to you!



Treasurer's Report

Last month saw a continuation of the church operating within our budget projections. Our congregation's generosity enables us to continue funding basic mission activities within

our financial means.

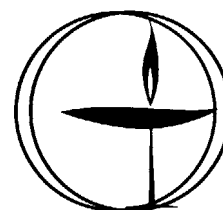
Assistant Treasurer Roberta Groch and I continue to work with congregational lay leaders to create a proposed FY2020 budget for use in helping set Commitment Drive goals. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we are requesting a list of events, programs, and projects that would be of great benefit to our church community if funding was available. We have extended the deadline for responses to that request until January 8 to allow lay leaders more time to consider the issue and evaluate the potential costs of their requests.

Funding for these requests will undoubtedly be in excess of our usual congregational operating expenses. The Prudential Committee is developing a prioritizing process to identify the additional funding requests that would have the greatest impact on achieving congregational mission and strategic goals. Funding prioritization will be applied in the event that the response to the Commitment Drive doesn't cover the additional cost of all new requests.

The prioritization process was tested by the Prudential Committee's Executive Committee on December 5 and approved for full Prudential Committee use during its January 9, 2019, meeting. A copy of the process is available upon request from the church office. A report on the results of new funding request prioritization will appear in our next newsletter column.

In the meantime, should you have any questions, please feel free to speak with me during Coffee Hour or contact me (dlhouse51@comcast.net.)

See you in church! – David House, Treasurer





Community Life

January Parish House Pot Luck Supper

Friday, January 11

Everyone, young and old and in between, is welcome at these monthly gatherings of members and friends of the congregation for food, fun and fellowship.

5:45p **Reception** in the Atrium

6:00p **Pot Luck Supper** in the Parish House parlors

Sign-up Forms: at the Pot Luck Suppers table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour

Food Donations: Bring a dish to share that serves eight to ten people: a main dish, vegetable, salad, or dessert. Use the sign-up form to indicate what food you will be bringing.

Volunteer Task Force: Check off on the sign-up form where you want to help.

Donation: \$2 per person / \$5 per family at the door



7:30p **Program in the Auditorium:** Side With Love

Following Thandeka's visit, many of us have been thinking about how to better be in community within our congregation and with those in the world, with the goal that we continue to grow in our efforts to transform our shared values into action. Please join Side With Love for supper, fellowship, and an opportunity to strengthen both our relationships with each other and with our wider community.

Our speaker will be Rev. Paul Langston-Daley of Bell Street Chapel, who will speak about restorative justice. We hope to welcome some of our Bell Street siblings for dinner and the program. Stay tuned for further details about the program!

Reservations for the dinner are strongly requested. Please fill out the tear-off sign-up form at the Pot Luck Suppers table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour or call the church office in advance (401.421.7970). Childcare for infants and children to age 10 will be available for parents who request in advance.

Commitment Drive Team Gearing Up

Since August, the Commitment Drive Team has been hard at work, preparing for the coming Commitment Drive season. Leaders and groups/teams/committees should be on the look-out during the months of January and February for visits from members of our team to speak with you about your pledge for the upcoming church fiscal year (which begins July 2019). We would love to kick off our drive by reporting that all of our leaders have pledged generously.

A Successful #Giving Tuesday

Speaking of generosity, we want to extend a huge "thank you" to the 46 members who stepped up and contributed to our first ever #GivingTuesday fund raiser. Through the gifts of these members, we raised over \$3,600 to support our Sanctuary program and help out our guest family over the holiday season. Through social media, emails, and announcements, we launched our online giving platform that will allow folks to give using their credit/debit cards and also to set up recurring payments to satisfy pledges. If you haven't already donated, please use this link (<http://bit.ly/DonateFirstUPVD>) or download the GivePlus+ app onto your phone and search for First Unitarian Church of Providence.

Please Join Us!

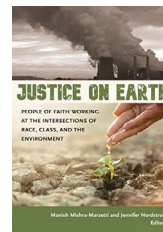
If you are interested in helping out with the Commitment Drive Team, please contact Joe Fisler (jfisler1@gmail.com) or Cynthia Rosengard (crosengard@gmail.com), co-leaders of our team. We have an awful lot of fun and are always looking for folks who have a passion for First Unitarian!

– Joe Fisler, Commitment Drive Co-chair

Rescheduled UUA Common Read Discussion

Thursday, January 17 at 7:00p

Our Common Read discussion, rescheduled due to inclement weather, will take place on January 17. The book can be purchased on Sundays at the Atrium Bookstore or online.



Please let Cathy Seggel know if you plan to participate (401.421.7970 or dre@firstunitarianprov.org).

Harry Potter and the Sacred Text

Monday, January 7, 7:15p

Join us as we use methods of sacred text analysis to explore the Harry Potter series. There are groups popping up all over the world. Come experience Harry Potter First Unitarian-style! This month we work on *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, chapters 17 & 18, Freedom.

UUSC Guest at Your Table

Box Return, Sunday, January 6

UU Service Committee Guest at Your Table boxes will be collected on January 6 by the members of our eighth-grade class. With their mentors, they will roll the coins so the contributions can be deposited and a check sent to the UUSC.



Please leave your filled boxes outside the Haynes classroom in the Atrium or in the office.

Community Collections 2018-19

On several Sundays during the year, First Unitarian donates its non-pledge Sunday offering to a charitable cause. Many thanks to those who have contributed to these collections. So far this year we donated over \$2,000 for **Resilient Power Puerto Rico**, raised over \$1,600 for **Sojourner House in Providence**, and collected over \$2,000 for our **Loaves & Fishes Mission**. Our remaining collections for this year are:

January 13

Providence Village

February 3

Transylvania Partner Church

March 10

The Girl Effect

April 14

Day One



Community Life

Variety Show 2019 – Call for Acts

Show date: Saturday, March 23

March 23 marks the return of First Unitarian's Variety Show! To the entire first Unitarian community: Hold the date on your calendar!

This is not a "talent show." Variety Show is a tightly staged program of actors, poets, musicians, and movement artists from within and around our church community. Those who attended our last Variety Show will tell you it was an experience of professional entertainment not to be missed. This year's show is a celebration of community, at no charge to our members or friends.

We already have a good number of performers signed up for the program, but we are looking for a few more exceptional performers to fill out the remainder of the show. If you, or someone you know, is an accomplished actor, comedian, musician, or dancer, please contact David House (dlhouse51@comcast.net) to learn how you can be part of this exciting performance.

More on the Meeting House Renovations

The Prudential Committee has approved moving ahead with the Benefit Street foyer entrance restoration, pending receipt of outstanding 2019 Capital Campaign pledge amounts.

End-of-year Capital Campaign Update Reports were mailed out on December 5 to all Capital Campaign contributors. The letter thanked those who have already paid a portion or all of their pledge and requested that outstanding amounts be paid by March 31, 2019. Payment by March 31 will enable the foyer entrance repair work to be done by the end of this coming spring, well in advance of our congregation's 300th anniversary celebration in 2020.

To those members and friends joining our congregational community after the 2016 Capital Campaign drive, you are welcome to contribute to the further restoration of our beautiful Meeting House. Simply write a check for the amount you wish to contribute, payable to "First Unitarian Church Providence" and note "Capital Campaign contribution" in the memo line. If you wish to pay by credit card, please contact the church office (admin@firstunitarianprov.org) for instructions.

In the meantime, work on restoring the Revere Bell clapper and damper system is proceeding. Emergency repair work on the Benevolent Street Atrium entrance glass wall ground-level sill is complete. This work will ensure the Atrium entrance's lower level windows will stay properly seated and sealed over the winter. Final restoration work on the glass wall will commence and be completed before spring is over. Meanwhile, our Building Manager, Jaime Durango, and I have been sprucing up the arch over the pulpit. No more peeling paint!

There is a lot to do to keep up the buildings and grounds of our campus. A resurrection of our Building and Grounds Committee is needed to help keep our property picked up and in good repair. Working on Buildings and Grounds is gratifying due to the immediate results of task completion. Please let Lynn Bradford, chair of the Nominating Committee, know if you are interested in leading or participating in Buildings and Grounds committee work.



David on high!

– David House



The Green Team Wants to Hear from You!

Monthly meeting, Sunday, January 13

In mid-January, you'll receive a survey from the First Unitarian Green Team Environmental Task Force. The survey should take less than five minutes to complete. Your answers will help the Green Team evaluate your energy and water usage, recycling habits, food choices, and other elements of sustainability. Understanding your interests will help us create projects to improve environmentally friendly practices and habits in our congregation. Watch your inbox!

– Kristin Ivy Moses, Chair

The Women's Alliance

Monthly Meeting

Monday, January 7

Business Meeting: 10:00a

Program: 11:00a, followed by luncheon (\$10)

Program: **The Social Brain**

Speaker: **Patricia Gifford, M.D.**

Wisdom is a social phenomenon. One of the most surprising neural patterns to emerge from the functional MRI is that of social intelligence, which appears to be the brain's "default" state. As we age, and task-oriented cognitive functions wane, our social smarts shine brighter than ever.

Patricia Gifford, M.D., is a retired internist and geriatrician. She has spent 30 years caring for frail elders wherever they lived and appreciating the crucial role that social connection plays in their health and well-being.

All are welcome to attend the Women's Alliance monthly programs.

Coffee Sales Every Sunday

The Women's Alliance sells two bold coffees, one medium, and two decafs. All types come in both beans and drip-grind 12 oz. bags. And all are organic and freshly roasted in Rhode Island! Your purchase helps the community – the Alliance donates proceeds from its sales to worthy causes.



Visit the Women's Alliance table in the Atrium at Coffee Hour.

Camp Street Ministries

Save your grocery receipts from Eastside Marketplace and put them in the collection box at the back table in the Atrium near the Haynes Room. The Women's Alliance collects them for the benefit of Camp Street Ministries.

Hats Off to ...

Everyone who helped with our Christmas Eve pageant and services.

Many thanks to our **Coffee Hour Providers** last month:

Mary Frappier, Betty Finn, Rachel Meade, Bobbi Fidler, John Moran, Tony Allen, Anne Connor, Katy Killilea, Barbara Westlake, Lucille Riccitelli, Elissa Emerson Cynthia Rosengard, Robert Groche, Paul Ritualo, Jamie Poca, Claude LeBoeuf, Kevin Cliff, Lisa Maloney, Enka Rysley, Joyce Boober, Robert O. Jones, Nancy Weiss-Fried, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



Community Life

**“We drink from wells we did not dig.”
An Invitation from the Benevolent Society**

*Two sessions: Thursday, January 10 at 7:00p
Wednesday, January 23 at 2:30p*

This season reminds us that we are all beneficiaries of gifts left to our church by others in decades gone by. Bequests to our endowment are gratefully received from the savings of members who have passed on. This is not a program just for rich people. All gifts of any amount are precious and welcome.

Rich or poor, old or young, the Benevolent Society invites you to learn how simple it is to leave a bit of whatever you have left to the church – after you have “left.” To learn more, attend a one-hour meeting on January 10 or 23. You’ll be glad you did.



The Benevolent Society is a revival of a former organization in the church that was responsible for the financial well-being of the church. Newly reconstituted, its goal is to encourage members and friends to make legacy gifts to the church to ensure its ongoing financial health.

– Ralph Mero, Convenor

A History Mystery: What Does It Say?

The History Committee has received several queries about the marble plaque set in the wall above the entrance to the Meeting House. The plaque has weathered so badly over the last 200 years that it is hard to decipher what is inscribed on it. So the question has been asked: “What does it say?”



Historic preservationists have advised us not to attempt to restore the plaque but to leave it as is. So, we took a picture of it and, through the magic of Photoshop, have created a facsimile of what is inscribed there:

DESTROYED By Fire / June 14, AD 1814 / REBUILT / AD 1816 / J.H. Greene, Archt.

We have printed and framed this image and will place it in the foyer (after the upcoming renovations) so that all those wondering will know what it says.

– Janet Downing Taylor, Chair

Path to Membership Class

*Two-part session: Saturday, February 9, 10:00–1:00 p
Sunday, February 10, 12:00–2:00 p*

The Path to Membership class is for anyone who is interested in membership or in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian. The classes are led by our minister, Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay; our Director of Religious Education, Cathy Seggel; and our Membership Coordinator, Jenn Nardone. Childcare is available if requested in advance. Registration forms are in the Newcomers’ Café and on the Membership Board in the Parish House hallway.

There will be a two-session class in February, on the morning of February 9 and after the service on February 10. A tour of the church will follow each session (a light lunch will be served before the Sunday tour).

Anyone interested in this class but unable to attend should let Jenn Nardone know; there will be at least one more session of classes scheduled this church year.

For questions, contact: Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or call the church office (401.421.7970). On Sundays, Jenn can be found in the Newcomers’ Café in the Parish House (behind the fireplace).

Newcomers’ Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

Held in the Paneled Parlor (behind the fireplace), the Café is hosted by a rotating cast of church members and offers coffee, goodies, and fellowship. If you’re new to the church, this is a great place to meet people in a less daunting setting than the regular Coffee Hour. If you’ve been around for a while, this is a great place to help new folks get acclimated.

To sign on as a Café host, contact: Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org)

A New Year of Coffee Hours!

Happy New Year! Here’s a great resolution for the New Year: Sign up regularly to bring food to the Coffee Hour! Remember that our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by the Women’s Alliance with *peanut- and peanut butter-free* donations from our congregation of baked or bought goodies such as brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake and more. In order to feed the ravenous crowd each Sunday, we need eight people bringing donations that serve 24 each. Plan on bringing something you like to eat at coffee hour. Sign-ups are preferred in order to plan for each upcoming Sunday.

Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour and go home with a reminder so you won’t forget.

Atrium Bookstore

The Atrium Bookstore is open every Sunday during Coffee Hour, offering an eclectic mix of titles for kids and adults on meditation, social justice, spiritual paths, inspirations from other religious traditions, and environment concerns, including *Justice on Earth*, the UU Common Read.

– Irene and Tony Allen



Find Us on Facebook!

First Unitarian’s Facebook page is loaded with updates, useful links, photos, and more! Type “First Unitarian Providence” in the search box and check it out!

If you are interested in posting a church-related event, send an email to Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or contact the church office (401.421.7970).



Spiritual Development

Partner Church Sunday

Sunday, February 3

Service at 10:30a, Special Coffee Hour, Film and Discussion at 12:00p

We traditionally celebrate Partner Church Sunday early in the new year – this year on February 3. We have been in a partnership with the Unitarian

congregation in Szentegyhaza, Transylvania, for many years. Some of us have traveled there to get to know their congregation, and their minister and president have traveled here. In order to keep our relationship fresh from year to year, we set aside one Sunday each year for both congregations to celebrate our partnership with readings, stories, and song.

Look for some Hungarian snacks to enjoy during Coffee Hour and come upstairs to the Auditorium at noon for a discussion about our partnership, the latest details on our upcoming trip, and a film on the “History of Unitarianism in Transylvania from Francis David onward.”

For more information or for any questions for the discussion, please contact Janet Downing Taylor (jdtaylor39@verizon.net) or Tom Getz(thomas1getz@prodigy.net).

– Janet Downing Taylor, Tom Getz, Co-chairs, Transylvania Partner Church Committee



Becoming the Church We Want to Be with “Love Beyond Belief”

This fall, we welcomed the Rev. Thandeka, who brought her Love Beyond Belief™ program to help us to recognize various ways of becoming the church that we want to be. Through her time with us, she reflected back what she learned from listening to us – that we are yearning for more opportunities to deepen our connections with one another. The enhancements to our worship services, which many have noticed and voiced appreciation for, are the first step in our process. Each Sunday, our service opens with the statement that “in this church, we love beyond belief.”

In the coming year, look for enrichment of programming that will allow for personal reflection and shared experiences, expansion of our small-group ministry, and strengthening of the spiritual and emotional connections within teams/groups/committees that are doing the important work in support of our mission. The coming year will bring exciting changes and benefits as we live into our readiness to “love beyond belief.”

– Cynthia Rosengard



January Birthdays

- Cheryl Bartholomew
- Kate Bowden
- Elwood Donnelly
- Jess Duckett
- Channing Gray
- Lillian Jeznach
- Paul Lavallee
- Pat Maier
- Kristi Martel
- Elizabeth O’Connell
- Lauri Ontso
- Kevin Porter
- Rick Richards
- Lonnie Thomas
- Peter Van Erp

Haven’t seen your birthday listed? Do we know when it is? Contact the church office if you want your church friends to celebrate your special day with you!

Ongoing Programs

Benevolent Street Zendo

Most Monday nights, 7:00–8:30pm

We continue to practice with monthly visits from resident teacher James Cordova Sensei and occasional guest teachers for talks.

We have a book group reading: Larry Yang’s *Awakening Together*. Many of us got to hear him speak and join in a discussion about how to better welcome diversity in our community.

All are welcome these sessions. For a brief orientation, please arrive at 6:45p on Monday evening.

This is an activity of First Unitarian but is part of Boundless Way Zen (www.boundlesswayzen.org) Benevolent Street Zen.)

Contact: Practice leaders Cindy and George Beshers at benevolentstreetzen@gmail.com.

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00pm

Reimagining Religion is an ongoing attempt to employ the best recent scholarship in coming to grips with issues raised by radically new developments in the study of religion and thereby achieving a fuller appreciation of what religious literacy entails in the twenty-first century.

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)

Tai Chi

Every Tuesday at 7:00pm

Tai Chi class for beginners to advanced, children to seniors. All inclusive. Instruction and performance. Make the connection between mind, body and spirit in a manner that embodies the concepts of Taoist philosophy with the practice of an old internal martial art.

Contact: Al Tringali (altringali@mac.com.)

Innate Wisdom and Compassion Meditation

Every Wednesday at 7:00pm

This drop-in group offers guided meditations of wisdom, love, and compassion. These practices are adapted from Tibetan Buddhism into new forms that can touch the hearts and minds of people from all backgrounds and faiths, to help each of us bring out the best in ourselves and in our service and social action.

Contact: Ken Bent ([krebent108@gmail.com](mailto:krbent108@gmail.com))



Social Justice

Our Sanctuary Family Is Moving On

By the time you are reading this, we anticipate that the family who has been staying in our Sanctuary Space will have moved from Rhode Island to Mexico. We are saddened that they were not able to remain in the United States as they had hoped. Unfortunately, with the current political climate in our country, the family would have had to be separated for many difficult months, with the father remaining in detention. In order to be together, the family has chosen a voluntary departure. We wish them the best as they reestablish themselves in Mexico, and hope that they are able to find a safe place to live.

We regret that we were not able to introduce the family to the congregation. Things developed and changed rapidly, and their stay was so short, we were not able to have many people meet them. For all those who were fortunate enough to be able to host during this time, the time and the care you brought to each shift was appreciated by the Sanctuary Host Steering Committee and very much by the family as well.

The sense of community that formed around our family and with our hosts was amazing. People from many different backgrounds joined together to help keep our family safe and provide them with all they needed during their stay. We look forward to continuing our work with the Brown Immigrant Rights and others in the Brown University community; the Alliance to Mobilize our Resistance; the Sisters of Mercy; members of Temple Emanu-el, Congregation Agudas Achim, Temple Habonim, Beneficent Congregational, the Providence Zen Center, Westminster Unitarian, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County, First Unitarian Church of Providence; and friends of people from all these places. We are especially grateful to our wonderful church staff for adapting, helping, and joining us as friends through these weeks of changes, challenges, and learning. We don't know when we will be called to help someone again, but we know that, with the help of all these people, we will be ready.

– The Sanctuary Host Steering Committee

Side with Love: Opportunities to Learn

As the New Year begins, we hope you feel a renewed sense of commitment and a desire to help make change in the world. Opportunities to educate yourself and support many different political, social, and faith actions abound. Here are a couple of important events you can participate in this month:

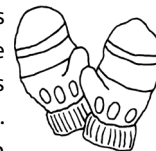
On Tuesday, January 8, the **RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty** is holding an interfaith vigil at the State House from 3:00 to 4:00p. Leaders from faith communities across the state will gather to bear witness to our collective faith traditions' teachings that we are to be a community that cares for all, not just some; call on our elected officials to govern with care, compassion, and wisdom; propose policies for legislative action in 2019; and find and offer inspiration and encouragement in the struggle for economic justice. Join our minister, Liz Lerner Maclay, in attending this event.

Following Thandeka's visit, many of us have been thinking about how to better be in community within our congregation and with those in the world, with the goal that we continue to grow in our efforts to transform our shared values into action. Please join **Side With Love** on January 11 for supper, fellowship, and an opportunity strengthen both our relationships with each other and with our wider community. Stay tuned for more details about programming.

Our congregation has been invited to join the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in Braintree, MA on January 19, from 9:00a to 1:00p for a free **social action conference on The Wage Gap: How We Can Help the Working Poor**. The organizer says, "Our primary objective is to educate the public about this issue, but also to begin searching for solutions to the problem. We will be discussing how we, as individuals, as a congregation, and as a community at large, can work with those calling for and organizing for respect and a living wage. We're all in this together!" This is an opportunity for us to join with a neighboring UU church and forge a relationship, share ideas, and learn from one another. Side with Love will be organizing car pooling to the event. If you are interested, email Katherine.ahlquist@gmail.com

Our Mitten Tree Is Blooming!

On December 30, following the Sunday Service, we will dedicate our Mitten Tree. Our tradition of hanging "warmings" on a tree has been modified this year to give our young, newly planted trees time to establish themselves.



So, we will hang our mittens on fencing encircling the tree on Benevolent Street, nearest the Meeting House front doors.

To make a donation to the tree, leave items in the basket in the Atrium marked Mitten Tree. We will collect new or gently used hats, scarves, mittens, gloves and socks, tag them and hang them as needed throughout the winter season.

Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly meeting, January 6 at 12:15p

The NSJC provides volunteer opportunities to work beyond our church doors with those who are socially, economically, or legally marginalized. Please stop by the NSJC table in the Atrium any Sunday after worship service to find out how you can help us to help others! Everybody is welcome participate in our meetings and activities.

Loaves and Fishes

First Tuesday of the month

This month's Loaves and Fishes schedule will change due to the New Year's holiday on the first Tuesday. Please stop by the NSJC table on January 6 to find out when the monthly activities (Sandwich Brigade, Outreach Mission, and Serving Crew at Emmanuel House)will be taking place:

Our Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day, Monday, January 21

The Food Pantry only works as well as it does because of our wonderful volunteers. We are especially looking for people with strong backs and some muscle power to help with clean-up. If you're looking for a leadership role, we can train you for that, too.

Volunteer for a shift on Distribution Day:

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

Restock, recycle, and clean up: 5:00p–6:00p

If you are in need of food, we welcome you to come to the Food Pantry. After a brief intake session, you'll be able to get groceries for the week. No eligibility requirements.

Contact: Martha Manno, Amy Grant, Ann Boyd, or Judy Ortman or email the church office.

For more information on these and future programs (meeting locations, contact information, etc.), see details in the church newsletter at www.firstunitarianprov.org

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Happy New Year CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	2 Commitment Drive Team 6:45p Meditation 7:00p	3	4	5
6 Worship 10:30a Return Guest at Your Table Boxes Mentor/Mentee/ Parents lunch 12:00p NSJC 12:15p	7 Women's Alliance Program 11:00a Luncheon 12:00p Zendo 7:00p Harry Potter 7:15p	8 Deacons 6:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	9 p PruComm 6:45 Meditation 7:00p	10 Benevolent Society Workshop 7:00p	11 Parish House Pot Luck 6:00p Program 7:30p	12
13 Worship 10:30a Blessing of the Animals Green Team 12:15p Campus UUs 5:00p UUMen 7:00p	14 Zendo 7:00p	15 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	16 Commitment Drive Team 6:45p Meditation 7:00p	17 UUA Common Read 7:00p	18	19
20 Worship 10:30a Campus UUs 5:00p	21 MLK Day CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Food Pantry 2:00–6:00p Zendo 7:00p	22 Tai Chi 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	23 Benevolent Society Workshop 2:30p Meditation 7:00p	24	25	26 TACO Fiesta 6:00–8:00p
27 Worship 10:30a Partner Church Sunday Film & Discussion 12:00p TechConnect 11:45–1:00p Campus UUs 5:00p	28 Zendo 7:00p	29 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	30 Commitment Drive Team 6:45p Meditation 7:00p	31		